

12-3-22 Redraft OWR STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

I. CORE VALUES

Our Wisconsin Revolution (OWR) is about making Wisconsin a true democracy — with a government & economy that are of, by and for the people. Our Wisconsin Revolution is a homegrown movement started here in our state by people living here. OWR's formation was inspired by Bernie Sanders' run for president in 2016 and his call for a political revolution, and is part of a national movement. We believe in a people's economy and a representative government that works for all. OWR seeks to promote the common good and general welfare. Promoting equality and valuing diversity are fundamental to our mission.

II. MEMBER STANDARDS

To achieve our common goals as peers and colleagues collaborating together we agree to work together with integrity in safe and kind ways that assume the best intentions of others:

- We agree to discuss, debate and disagree openly in meetings, expressing ourselves as clearly and honestly as possible while together. We agree to avoid talking about others behind their backs.
- When debating, we critique ideas, not people. We will practice equanimity and respect, not letting differences of opinion become personal attacks. We will ask questions rather than judge others.
- We will work together, building upon each other's comments to find mutual and equitable solutions.
- We are aware of our own limitations. If we have offered to take on a task which we are unable to complete, we will report back and seek assistance.
- We acknowledge historical and individual trauma, realizing its impacts may trigger withdrawal or aggression, but can also move toward powerful advocacy when supported by peers.
- We avoid misrepresenting others by telling only a part of the story.
- We value and will encourage feedback, remain open to those providing it, actively listen and not retaliate against those who provide feedback.
- We will actively oppose bullying or harassment, intervening when we see it or hear it. We do not expect the target of the bullying or harassment to be the only one who objects to such treatment.
- We will try not to discriminate against others on the basis of their age, disability, economic/annual income, employment, ethnic origin, gender or gender identity, geography, place of birth, race, religion, sexual orientation or socio-economic status.¹
- If perceived violations of these standards are not resolved right away, we promise to attempt an informal process and/or formal process as needed and as set out below.

III. WAYS TO VOICE AND MOVE BEYOND CONFLICT

INFORMAL PROCESS Sometimes, a person with a complaint about our conduct comes to us directly and informally. In this opportunity, we listen carefully to the feedback and try to repeat it back to the complainant as in, "I am hearing you say that you do not like how I perform this task. How would you prefer that I do it?" We thank each person for their point of view and try to reach an agreement going forward. And they may use ACTIVE LISTENING TECHNIQUE² below with or without a third person.

¹ *Examples include a) assuring facilities we use provide and sign gender neutral restrooms; b) proactively negotiating reasonable accommodations with persons with disabilities such as including adequate response time; c) listening to marginalized persons such as those formerly incarcerated; d) providing financial aid to chapters in areas of persistent poverty and e) not cutting off some classes of persons more than others.*

² *Use active listening skills to effectively deal with conflict Michigan State University Extension 12-2-2013*
https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/use_active_listening_skills_to_effectively_deal_with_conflict

If both parties agree, a third person is invited to facilitate a discussion with active listening. In that case the invited third person asks each person to say something they like about the other person and have that other person repeat it back to them. Both the other person and the third person may comment as to whether the repeated back was fairly accurate. Only then is the person with the feedback asked to give their feedback and what conduct is preferred in the future. The other has to repeat the feedback and suggested change in conduct back to the complainant. As the one receiving the feedback, we then respond as to whether we can make the change for the future and/or offer other options to see if agreement can be achieved. The one with the feedback repeats that back to us to our and the third party's satisfaction. We keep going back and forth repeating what the other has suggested until hopefully right relations can be restored. The session ends the way it started... that is the third person asks each person to say something they like about the other person that they repeat back to the speaker to their satisfaction.

The complainant may go to the following Formal Process with or without having gone through this Informal Process.

FORMAL PROCESS The OWR Board, after invitations to members, shall name an OWR Unity Committee. The Committee make-up should represent a peer group for the diversity of OWR, while still being able to act promptly. The officers of OWR are not part of the Unity Committee.

When a concern, complaint or allegation under these Standards is made about the conduct of a voting member, staff member, committee member or chapter member, the aggrieved or observer may bring it directly to the attention of an OWR Unity Committee member.

If anyone on the Unity Committee is a witness to the accusation or conflicted about the possible offender or victim, that person will not vote in the Committee's determination, but may be called as a witness. Participating in a Board meeting, but not directly involved in a dispute during that meeting, shall not be considered being a witness.

If an OWR voting member becomes aware of a serious breach of the Standard of Conduct by a voting member, staff member, committee member or chapter member, we are duty bound to report this to the OWR Unity Committee. If we knew about a grievous breach of this code but failed to report it, we ourselves are subject to disciplinary action.

OWR shall attempt to assure that no complainant shall experience negative repercussions or adverse effects as a result of attempting to honestly report an allegation, even if later the allegation is proven to be false.

DETAILS If we knowingly make a false or malicious allegation then we ourselves may be subject to loss of membership.

The accused member and any reporting member (reporter) will be informed of the Unity Committee's determination that there is a concern within the jurisdiction of the Unity Committee under this Code, but no reporter name shall be provided.

Initial fact finding and/or informal counseling will be conducted by the Unity Committee in a confidential way. A special investigator, experienced adviser or conflict resolution facilitator may be appointed to assist the Unity Committee. Of course, in those serious instances that reporting is required by law, we will contact the police or other appropriate agency. If this does not resolve this matter and serious violation concerns remain, a closed hearing will be held by the Unity Committee. It may be an open hearing if all parties agree. All parties shall have an opportunity to present their grievances and responses.

The Unity Committee will meet and report its conclusion as to whether the accused did or did not engage in conduct violating this code and what if any conduct should be taken or consequences should be imposed by the OWR Board.

Complaints are expected to be made shortly after an incident has occurred. However, in some circumstances this may not be possible, including where concerns arise from accumulation of events.

IV. Options for Violation of Standards of Conduct

Based on the decision of the Board that a violation of these Standards was committed, the appropriate disciplinary action, if any, is taken. These may include informal counseling, a verbal reprimand, written reprimand, requirement to report back on a restorative justice effort, suspension from a Chapter and/or OWR membership, and/or removal from office in the Chapter and/or from the OWR Board.

As stated in the OWR Bylaws Article III 4. "Termination requires a two-thirds majority vote by a quorum of members or of the Board of Directors." The determination of the discipline should be based on the seriousness of the violation.

OWR will respond to violations of the Standards of Conduct as appropriate, regardless of position, status or personal relationship, and in accordance with national and local legislation and/or the terms and conditions of service.

V. Amendment of Standards and Increased Training

These Standards cannot cover all aspects of good conduct. Where there are any concerns about possible or potential misconduct or behavior that may bring the organization into disrepute, we undertake to raise the concerns with the Unity Committee for their consideration first for training and/or additional standards. Amendments may be adopted by the Majority of the Board of Directors.

VI. A REFLECTION RESOURCE

Amnesty International provides this resource from their Activist Code of Conduct to describe ways of working with each other that should be applied consistently:

Communication: I listen to others and, when I communicate, I am respectful, clear, honest and inclusive. I give constructive feedback and allow others to give feedback. **Collaboration: I seek** to build strong, collaborative working relationships. I share my expertise where it is required and encourage others to do the same.

Consideration: I manage my time and workload and am respectful of the time and workload of others. I am fair and consistent in my decision making and my dealings with others.

Change: I innovate and improve the way things are done, learning from setbacks. I make time to increase my knowledge and skills, and support others to do the same. ³

³ From 2021 Amnesty International UK Section of **Activist Code of Conduct**
<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/files/2021-06/AIUK%20activist%20CoC%20JUNE%202021.pdf?VersionId=h3jRr5uz7ljZNPYRN7.OEa3USKsg918Q>

VII. DEFINITIONS FOR THESE STANDARDS

Harassment is conduct affecting the dignity of the recipient who views it as unwanted or unacceptable. It may be related to age, sex, race, disability, religion, nationality or any personal characteristic. Harassment is a human rights issue and takes place when someone victimizes another on the basis of them being in a protected class. It can create a hostile or intimidating environment.

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behavior, abusing or misusing power through means that threaten, undermine, humiliate, denigrate, marginalize, misrepresent, injure or isolate others or their reputation. It is coercion to dominate, limiting another's ability to participate.

Sexual Exploitation is sexual activity, requests for sexual favors, invitation, or touching by a person in a position of trust or authority with another person who is young, has mental or physical disabilities or is dependent upon them. A position of trust, authority or dependence may include a counselor, coach, supervisor, minister, mentor, or an OWR leader.

Sexual Assault is the intentional use of force of a sexual nature without his or her consent. Grabbing someone's breast or sexual intercourse without a person's consent are examples. Trying to use force, or threatening to use force, may also be assault.

Consent to Sexual Activity is freely given affirmative agreement to sexual activity by a person with the age and capacity to consent.

Reasonable Accommodation is adjustment made to enable a person with a physical, mental, speech, hearing, cognitive or similar disability status the ability to participate fully in OWR and the community. New to many are accommodations for those in trauma or in past trauma flashbacks.⁴

Misrepresentation is any untrue or unfair statement that is likely to mislead. It includes failure to state information that is material and ought, in fairness, be considered. Misrepresentation is especially harmful when outside the presence or opportunity of response for the person misrepresented.

VIII. Specific Concerns

Drugs and alcohol misuse We do not perform our OWR duties while under the influence of intoxicating substances such as alcohol or other substances that significantly impair one's ability. We do not consume or possess illegal substances during performance of our OWR duties or events.

Conflicts of Interest and Impartiality OWR is a transparent organization. We promote participation in the OWR practices of democracy. We maintain the integrity of such processes and respect the OWR decisions. We declare any personal or financial interests that may be perceived to impact decisions.

Endorsement of Candidates Our comments of endorsement or criticism are based on research and statements. Members and leaders are open about our decisions and actions. We make choices and endorse candidates based on merit and positions taken. OWR Board members and Chapter chairs inform Co-Chairs of OWR if they or a family member is becoming a candidate for public office.

Personal Sexual Conduct We support the "No Means No" and "Yes means Yes" movements and training requiring affirmative consent to sexual activity. In daily life we intervene and report if we become aware of sexual violence.

⁴ Trauma accommodations may include: restraining noise & startling movements; asking before sudden close encounters or hugs; avoiding dominating stances (standing with arms crossed); taking breaks; avoiding judging a person's silence or downcast eyes.

As individuals we do not exchange money, employment, goods, favors or services for sex. We do not engage in humiliating, degrading or exploitative sexual activity.

We are aware that our positions as leaders in a movement may mean that children, youth and young adults look up to us as trusted persons in authority, with power for their futures. We will not use such positions for sexual exploitation or favors.

We use all computers and social media responsibly and refrain from inappropriate usage, especially that relates to offensive material, including, but not restricted to, abusive images of children or child pornography. As OWR, we are typically working with other adults. But because more teenagers are becoming leaders in the movement we provide guidelines for protecting youth.

Social Media Youth Connections OWR adults do not initiate connections with youth on social media sites (i. e. inviting someone to be a friend on Snapchat). If a youth requests such a connection from us, we use our best judgment in responding, such as checking with a parent first. We treat our interaction with youth on social networking sites as though the interaction were occurring in public, in front of other adults and young people. In other words, if it would not be appropriate to say something to a young person in public, it is not written as a comment on social media. ⁵ End-note i

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Youth Protection

As adults we do not initiate nor become involved in sexual relationships or sexual touching (including kissing with wet or open mouth) with those under the age of eighteen years. Neither consent by the youth nor mistaken belief regarding the age of the minor is a defense.

We report all concerns regarding child abuse or mistreatment to local authorities.

We make sure that our own time with a minor is visible to others. We educate and follow the “rule of threes” as an important guide protecting both youth and adults.

As adults we share overnight space with youth only in rooms or dorms with multiple beds and only with other responsible adults present who are 21 years of age or older.

Drawn from Kiwanis Youth Protection Guidelines:

<http://www.kiwanis.org/docs/default-source/training/training/risk-management/youth-protection/october-2016-youth-protection-guidelines-updated.pdf>